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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/532,754	04/27/2005	Hiromitsu Tsutsui	4492-0125PUS1	9284
2292 7590 07/13/2007 BIRCH STEWART KOLASCH & BIRCH PO BOX 747 FALLS CHURCH, VA 22040-0747			EXAMINER JOERGER, KAITLIN S	
			ART UNIT 3653	PAPER NUMBER
			NOTIFICATION DATE 07/13/2007	DELIVERY MODE ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

mailroom@bskb.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/532,754

Applicant(s)

TSUTSUI, HIROMITSU

Examiner

Kaitlin S. Joerger

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3653

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 27 April 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 4/27/05 7/18/06
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____
- 5) ☒ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: ____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 10-297039, as cited by applicant.

Regarding claim 1, the JP '039 reference teaches an image forming apparatus, comprising:

- a sheet transport path, see arrow in figure 5, leading from a sheet feeding section through an image forming position to a sheet ejecting section;
- a lower sheet ejecting roller, 34, arranged in the sheet ejecting section below the sheet transport path; and
- an upper sheet ejecting roller, 36 and 37, arranged above the sheet transport path so as to be in direct contact with the lower sheet ejecting roller see figures 5 and 6,
- wherein the upper sheet ejecting roller is divided in a direction perpendicular to a sheet transport direction into a plurality of portions and the portions are in direct contact with the lower sheet ejecting rollers at respective points in the sheet transport direction, see figure 3.

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Regarding claim 2, the JP '039 reference teaches that part or all of the portions of the upper sheet ejecting roller are displaced from one another upstream or downstream in the sheet transport direction, see figures 5 and 6.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 3 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 10-297039 in view of JP 4-58355, as cited by applicant.

Regarding claim 3, the JP '039 reference teaches all of the features of the claimed invention except for an upper sheet ejecting roller which comprises 3 different rollers, the JHP '039 reference teaches a roller comprising two different roller which are in direct contact with the lower sheet ejecting roller.

The JP '355-reference, however, teaches a lower sheet ejecting roller, 17a, and upper sheet ejecting roller which comprises at least three different rollers, 18a through 18d. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include three upper sheet ejecting rollers, as taught by JP '355, in the sheet apparatus of JP '039 in order to ensure that the sheet is properly guided around the lower sheet ejecting roller, and that the leading edge does not curl up.

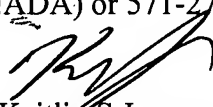
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Regarding claim 4, the JP '039 patent teaches that the rollers of the upper sheet ejecting roller are arranged symmetrically in relation to a center line of the sheet transport path, see figure 3.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kaitlin S. Joerger whose telephone number is 571-272-6938. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 9-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Mackey can be reached on 571-272-6916. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


Kaitlin S Joerger
Examiner
Art Unit 3653

3 July 2007